

**VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hazen Union High School Library, 126 Hazen Union Drive, Hardwick**  
**November 16, 2010**

*The State Board and Department of Education  
provide leadership, support and oversight to ensure that the  
Vermont public education system enables each student to be successful.*

**Approved MINUTES**

The current month's meeting agenda and packet materials may be accessed electronically at:  
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#packet>

**Attending:**

**Board Members:** Ruth Stokes, Vice-chair; Robert Kelley; Kathy Larsen; Brian Vachon;  
John Hall; Stephan Morse; Don Collins

**DOE Staff:** Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner; Rae Ann Knopf, Deputy Commissioner; Jill  
Remick; Mark Oettinger; Bill Talbott; Cathy Hilgendorf; Carol King

**Other:** Rick Hilton, Lyndon Institute; Sean-Marie Oller, Bennington; Ned Kirsch,  
Superintendent, FWSU; Helen Beattie, Director, YATST; JoAn Canning, Superintendent,  
OSSU; Elaine Laine, principal, Hazen UHS; Nicole Miller, REACH!/OSSU; Tom Gardner,  
Hardwick Gazette; Savannah Miller, Hazen UHS; Jen Schoen, Hazen UHS; Jodi Leu-  
Smith, Hardwick Elem. School; Karen Broderick, Hazen UHS parent; Jeff Francis, VSA;  
John Nelson, VSBA; Derek Demers, Emma Buckley, Jade Richards, Hillary Molleur, Faith  
Larocque, Taylor Ducharme, Finn Kane, Nicole Kish, Erin Whipple Cindy Donlon, Linda  
Romans – Hazen UHS students and faculty

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**Preliminaries**

**Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**

Ruth Stokes, Vice-chair and acting chair, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. and led the  
Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item B: Roll Call and Introductions**

Chair, Board Members introduced themselves, as did others in attendance.

**Item C: Announcements, Board Member Updates (Chair, Board Members)**

Brian Vachon has agreed to be the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators  
(VSBPE) liaison. Stokes distributed a letter from VSBPE chair Janet Steward regarding  
collaboration between the two boards.

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**Item D: Public to be Heard**

No one spoke at this time.

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### **Item E: Commissioner's Update**

Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner, thanked the Hazen principal Elaine Laine for hosting the Board. He thanked Vachon for attending Monday's Act One press conference, and explained more about the Act, which is about educating students, staff and the public to prevent child sexual abuse.

Vilaseca noted he has recently attended several supervisory union board meetings to discuss formation of Regional Education Districts (REDs) under Act 153 of 2010. The concept appears to be taking hold across the state and there are several ongoing conversations about better outcomes for students and efficiencies. There are several implementation challenges as well that will need to be addressed. Morse asked what role the Board has in participating in these conversations. There will be some ability to provide input during the legislative agenda development process. Stokes noted the Board is encouraged to see the number of districts considering this change, in light of the economic factors and the possibility of better delivery of education for students. Larsen noted that the Board's strategic plan aligns with this and the Board needs to implement the Strategic Plan.

Vilaseca reported that he has requested a meeting with Governor-elect Peter Shumlin to discuss these and other pertinent education issues.

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### **Discussion Items**

#### **Updates**

#### **Item F: Strategic Plan Implementation**

Rae Ann Knopf, Deputy Commissioner, updated the Board on the department's work on the implementation portion of the Strategic Plan, noting in particular the September 29 and November 15 full staff meetings. A draft written plan will be presented to the Board at its December 21 meeting.

In response to a comment from Kathy Larsen, Knopf reported on the five regional meetings held on the implementation of the Common Core Standards, noting that well over 450 people attended from all but four districts.

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#### **Item G: 2012 Budget Development Process**

Bill Talbott, Chief Financial Officer, updated the Board briefly on FY 2012 budget development. The understanding is that the requested six percent reduction exercise may become reality, and the department is waiting to receive further guidance from the Governor-elect. The disposition of the \$19 million education jobs funding will also need to be addressed. The commissioner has been clear he does not intend to cut staffing at the department. Commissioner Vilaseca wants to ensure the funds are spent in those areas that are statutorily required.

Commissioner Vilaseca noted the USED has indicated that there will not be further federal stimulus funds going to states anytime soon, and they are still considering whether any other funds would be competitive (such as Race to the Top).

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**Item H: Legislative Agenda Development** (Armando Vilaseca, Mark Oettinger, Bill Talbott, Rae Ann Knopf)

General Counsel Mark Oettinger explained that he has met with each department division director to gather a list of potential legislative agenda items. He anticipates the incoming legislature will be addressing Challenges for Change targets first to ensure school districts can be informed in their budget development process. The department would like the legislature to address some perceived gaps in Act 153 to best help districts. Issues such as losing school choice are an impediment to the development of Regional Education Districts (REDs). Another piece of Act 153 is the mandatory virtual consolidation piece at the supervisory union level which is being addressed at various stages of implementation.

Collins suggested the possibility of further work on early education as this is expected to be addressed by Governor-elect Shumlin.

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**Action Items**

**Item I: Annual Construction Aid Budget Request and Prioritized School Construction List** (Cathy Hilgendorf, Bill Talbott)

Cathy Hilgendorf spoke to the Board about the annual request to the legislature for school construction aid. The aid, since March 2007, has been on a suspension regarding eligibility and new projects. In general, schools that undertake construction now, with some exceptions, are doing this without state aid. She shared a spreadsheet listing current projects, in priority order, that are awaiting state aid, and noted that those districts are paying interest on their obligations. Overall the total construction aid owed to school districts is \$28 million. Hilgendorf recommended the Board approve a request for FY 2012 of \$15 million. She estimates that in FY 2013 there will be a consolidation project in the mix (for approximately \$2 million); these projects are eligible for state aid. It is unprecedented that some of these projects have taken this amount of time to get their state aid. Recent legislation does allow the department to deny projects based on the ability to consolidate or work regionally to accommodate students without adding to an existing building.

**Motion:** Brian Vachon moved, seconded by Don Collins, that the State Board of Education approve the school construction aid request, in the amount of \$15,051,362, for presentation to the House and Senate Institutions Committees in January 2011. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

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**Item K: RED Waiver Request: Fairfax & Fletcher School Districts** (Armando Vilaseca, Bill Talbott, Mark Oettinger; Ned Kirsch, Superintendent of Schools, Franklin West SU)

Ned Kirsch provided the Board with the additional information requested as a result of October 19<sup>th</sup>'s discussion, regarding student enrollment, staffing and potential savings. Essentially approval of this waiver will allow the Fairfax and Fletcher Town School Districts (Franklin West SU) to move ahead with the RED formation discussion without the requisite 1250 students or four districts.

**Motion:** Stephan Morse moved, seconded by John Hall, that the State Board of Education waive

the requirements of Act 153 of 2010 to allow the Fairfax and Fletcher Town School Districts (Franklin West SU) to begin a planning process which may lead to the formation of a Regional Education District (RED). The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Vilaseca noted that the Board will be looking at these waiver requests individually and that this decision does not mean that all such waiver requests will be automatically approved.

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**Item J: Federal Education Jobs Funding Position Statement** (Board, Armando Vilaseca, Bill Talbott, Mark Oettinger)

Stokes led the Board in the discussion of the use of the \$19 million Education Jobs Funding. Stokes noted some concerns about the proposed language of the statement, not the commissioner's recommendation. She passed out new proposed language for the Board's consideration, because the original was too prescriptive: "That the State Board of Education vote to adopt the position that the Federal Education Jobs Funding (\$19M) be distributed to Vermont school districts to be applied towards meeting the Challenges for Change reduction target of \$23 million scheduled to go into effect for the FY 2012 school year." This language is still within the spirit of the commissioner's recommendation, and is only a recommendation, as the Governor and the Legislature ultimately decide how the funding will be applied. Collins, who serves on his local school board, explained the uncertainty for boards in developing budgets at this time. Even with this funding school districts are facing significant reductions in spending that does impact students.

Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union Superintendent JoAn Canning spoke to the Board about the discussions happening in that SU regarding mergers, the Challenges for Change targets and the impact on decision-making. John Nelson, Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA), spoke to his support for the commissioner's position. He noted the federal law is very clear about the use of these funds and read from the federal law. He noted that there are concerns that the Legislature may not act on this in time for school budgets to be developed. Jeff Francis, Executive Director, Vermont Superintendents Association, also spoke and aligned his comments with the previous speakers. He stated that VSA is working on Act 153 implementation as well as addressing the cost structures of public education. He noted even the new Act One (of 2010) included "new mandates" for schools. Stokes remarked on the volume of mandates from the Legislature and the DOE that are a burden on the local school districts. Collins noted maybe it is time for the Board to address that volume of burden.

In response to Hall's question about the strategic nature of this item, Vilaseca responded that, while he is opposed to using one-time funds in this manner, advocating for the use of the \$19M in this way serves the best interest of students at this time and serves as a bridge to give school districts time to develop future budgets in light of anticipated reduced revenue and to have additional conversations regarding the implementation of Act 153.

**Motion:** Stephan Morse moved, seconded by Kathy Larsen, that the State Board of Education vote to adopt the position that the Federal Education Jobs Funding (\$19M) be distributed to Vermont school districts to be applied towards meeting the Challenges for Change reduction

target of \$23 million scheduled to go into effect for the FY 2012 school year. The motion was approved 6-1 (Hall).

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### **Item L: Consent Agenda**

**Motion:** John Hall moved, seconded by Robert Kelley, to approve the consent agenda with comment.

#### **1. Minutes of October 19, 2010 SBE Meeting**

#### **2. Independent School Approval** (Pat Pallas Gray, Michael Mulcahy)

General and Special Education Independent School Approval:

William Center, Brattleboro, VT (residential male & female Deaf children & adolescents ages 6-21)

Initial Approval:

William Center, Brattleboro, VT (residential male & female Deaf children & adolescents ages 6-21 on the Autism spectrum)

#### **3. Revisions to Prekindergarten Rules (Rules 2600-2612)** (Armando Vilaseca, Manuela Fonseca, Steve Dale)

The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

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12:17 p.m., the Board recessed for lunch

1:00 p.m., the Board reconvened

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### **Item M: Setting the Stage - Opportunities for Students: *Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YATST)***

Helen Beattie, Director, **YATST**, and Hazen students spoke about their program to engage students in their learning. Students “play” school to get through their education. The students did an activity that demonstrated student feelings towards their education. Core components include authentic youth-adult partnerships, engage in ACTION research, The Four Rs (rigor, relevance, relationships, (shared) responsibility). They broke the meeting in small groups for discussion on quotes from the “Quote Marketplace.” They explained the process they had gone through to create the YATST in their school. Work included a summer retreat with students from other YATST schools, creation and implementation of a survey at Hazen UHS, and frequent meetings to accomplish their objectives. They also assisted in the facilitation of the November 12 “**Be the Buzz**” statewide conference at Goddard College. The students continue to share information and engage their community in dialogue.

Other schools interested in **YATST** can contact Helen Beattie to find out more (hnbeattie@gamil.com).

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**Item N: Future Agendas** (Board members, Armando Vilaseca, Carol King)

Carol King led the Board in a development of future agendas. Items under consideration for the December 21 meeting include: FY 12 Budget Priorities; Legislative Agenda; Joint Discussion with VSBPE Exec Committee; PreK – 16 Council (Tim Donovan); VBR Update (from August discussion); Strategic Plan Implementation.

**Item O: Wrap Up and Adjourn**

**Motion:** Don Collins moved, seconded by John Hall, to adjourn the November 16, 2010 meeting of the State Board of Education. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

**Item P: Written Update**

1. SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) - Michael Hock

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick

Minutes prepared by Carol King